

## The End of Homespun—The Early Industrial Revolution

### Part A.

Read the documents below, and, on your own paper, compile a list of factors that contributed to the development of the early Industrial Revolution in the United States.

#### Document A

The Congress shall have power to promote the progress of science and useful arts, by securing for limited times to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.

*Constitution, Article I, Section 8.8*

#### Document B

The Erie Canal's . . . impact on the entire American economy was enormously stimulating. In the pre-Civil War years state governments supplied about three-quarters of the total funds invested in canals, and roughly half of the capital used to construct the rail network. Local communities and counties were also extremely active in subsidizing transportation improvements. In some cases, like that of the Erie Canal, these developmental efforts were operated as well as financed by governments. It was more common, however, for new ventures to be launched with government funds raised by taxation or the sale of public securities, then placed under private control. Public policy reflected not only widespread confidence in private enterprise, but a determination that it needed spurring to carry out large-scale development projects.

Government actively promoted industrial growth in other ways: erecting tariffs to protect domestic manufacturers from foreign competition; creating new legal arrangements, like the corporation, to stimulate the release of economic energy; and building schools to produce a better educated labor force.

*Stephan Thernstrom, A History of the American People, Vol. 1 (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1984), 217.*

#### Document C

##### A New England Farm Family's Reasons for Moving to a Mill Town, 1843

You will probely want to know the cause of our moveing here. One of them is the hard times to get a liveing off the farm for so large a famely. So we have devided our famely for the year. We have left Plummer and Luther to care for the farm with granmarm and Aunt Polly. The rest of us have moved to Nashvill thinking the girls and Charles they would probely worke in the Mill. But we have had bad luck in giting them in. Only Jane has got in yet. Ann has the promis of going to the mill next week. Hannah is going to school. We are in hopes to take a few borders but have not got any yet.

*Letter by Jemima W. Sanborn to Richard and Ruth Bennett, Nashua, New Hampshire, May 14, 1843. Quoted in Gary Kulik, Roger Parks, and Theodore Z. Penn, eds. The New England Mill Village, 1790-1860 (Cambridge, Mass.: The MIT Press, 1982), 397.*

### Document D

The first postwar Congress, one of the most fruitful of the nineteenth century, took long strides toward Clay's goal of an American System. By 1816 the Republican party numbered in its ranks a large cluster of interest groups, both urban and rural clamoring for protective duties on certain foreign goods entering the American market. Leading the protectionists were those who had invested in New England textile mills and Pennsylvania iron-smelters when the embargo and war had choked off European supplies. Seconding them were the hemp-growers of Kentucky, the wool-growers of Ohio and Vermont, and an assortment of Southerners and Westerners who hoped either to promote industry or to expand their domestic market behind a tariff wall.

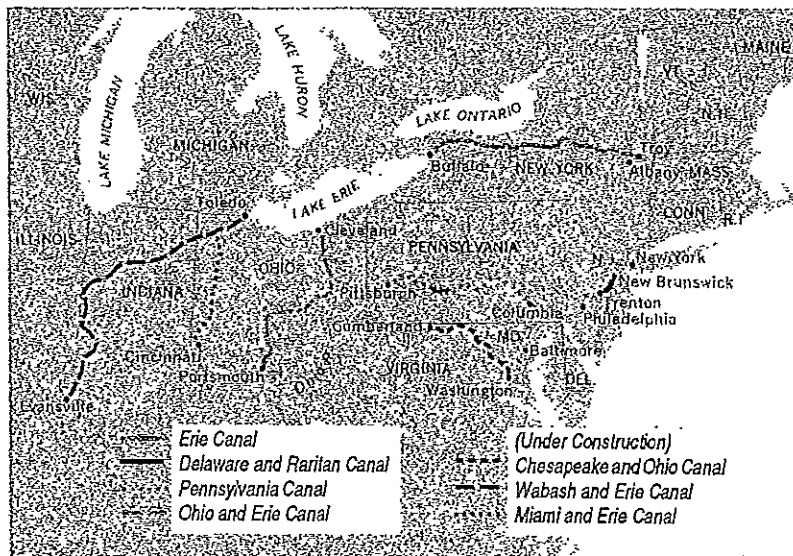
The cries of the protectionists grew louder when British exporters, seeking to dispose of surpluses accumulated during the war and to drive competing American manufacturers out of business, flooded the American market with relatively low-priced goods. A member of Parliament suggested that British goods might even be sold at a loss for a time, in order "to stifle in the cradle, those rising manufactures in the United States, which war has forced into existence, contrary to the natural course of things." In the critical years immediately following the war, British competition forced many small, less efficient American manufacturers to close their doors. Protectionists claimed that the British were plotting to wreck the American economy and asserted that a higher tariff was essential for national economic survival. America's "infant industries" were fragile things, they said, requiring the tender care of the federal government while they matured.

John H. Blum et al., *The National Experience, Part I*  
(New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977), 180.

### Document E

#### Principal Canals in 1840

Note that canals mainly facilitated east-west traffic, especially along the great Lake Erie artery. No comparable network of canals existed in the South—a disparity that helps to explain Northern superiority in the Civil War that came two decades later.



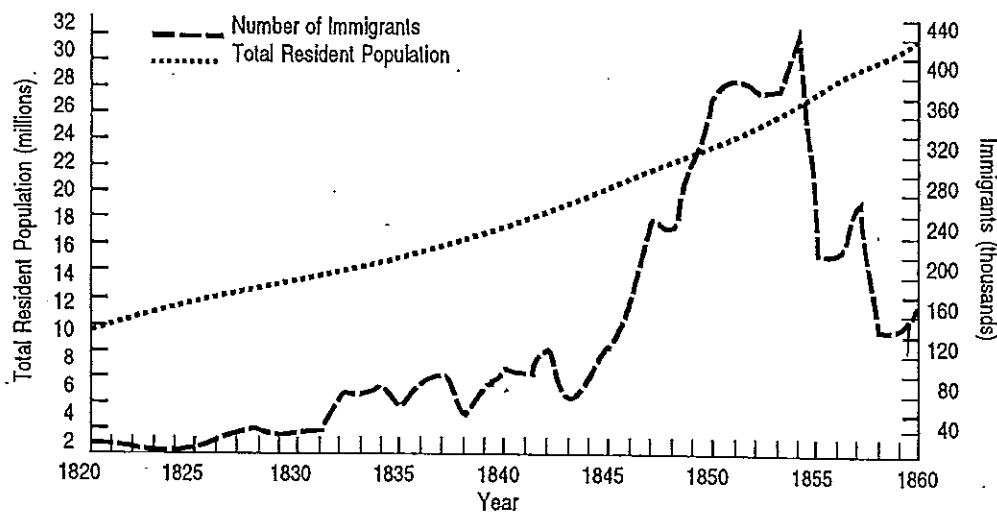
Thomas A. Bailey and David M. Kennedy, *The American Pageant*,  
7th ed. (Lexington, Mass.: D.C. Heath, 1983), 286.

### Document F

Eli Whitney, Samuel Slater, Oliver Evans, and others furnished the necessary technology for industry. In 1793, Eli Whitney developed a system of interchangeable parts which greatly accelerated the process of assembly. Samuel Slater, in 1790, brought the plans for a cotton mill by memory from England. Later, in 1804, Oliver Evans developed a high-pressure steam engine which was applied to mills and printing presses. Evans also experimented with techniques of mass production, which he employed in a flour mill.

### Document G

Population and Immigration to the United States, 1820-1860



Source: *Historical Statistics of the United States, Colonial Times to 1957*

Fig. 16.2. Irwin Unger, *These United States*, Vol. 1 (Boston, Mass.: Little Brown and Company, 1978); 237.

### Document H

The federal judiciary also promoted business enterprise. In *Gibbons v. Ogden* (1824), the Supreme Court overturned a New York state law that had given Robert Fulton and Robert Livingston a monopoly when Chief Justice Marshall ruled that the trade fell under the sway of the commerce clause of the Constitution. Thus Congress, not New York, had the controlling power. Since the federal government issued such licenses on a nonexclusive basis, the decision ended monopolies on waterways throughout the nation. Within a year, 43 steamboats were plying Ogden's route.

In defining interstate commerce broadly, the Marshall Court expanded federal powers over the economy while limiting the ability of states to control economic activity within their borders. Its action was consistent with its earlier decision in *Dartmouth College v. Woodward* (1819), which protected the sanctity of contracts against interference by the states.

"If business is to prosper," Marshall wrote, "men must have assurance that contracts will be enforced."

Mary Beth Norton, et al., *A People and a Nation*, Vol. I (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1982), 223.

### Document I

Investment capital for the early factory system came from both the public and private sectors. Commercial capitalists who could not invest in commercial enterprises during the Embargo and War of 1812 found an opportunity to put their money into early factories in the United States. State governments, and, to a far lesser degree, the federal government, invested in canals, banks, railroads and manufacturing firms to promote the economy of the area.

### Document J

The Bank of the United States, which had not been rechartered in 1811, had closed its doors. Without a national bank it was doubly difficult for the nation to pay for the war. Instead of being able to borrow from one central bank, the government had to deal with many. Without any Bank of the United States, state banks (private banks chartered by the states) had multiplied rapidly, each issuing its own paper money. There was no one national currency. In the dark days of the war, after the British burned Washington, many holders of these state bank notes tried to convert them to gold and silver (specie) as the banks had promised. But, lacking specie, the banks refused. As a result the value of the state bank notes declined. The bonds of the federal government sold below face value, and the national debt soared.

To deal with these hard economic problems, the federal government decided to charter a bank similar to Hamilton's bank of 1791, but with a larger capital. Again the government would hold one-fifth of the stock and would name one-fifth of the directors. Southern statesmen who had argued against the constitutionality of the old bank now suddenly changed their tune. They favored the second Bank of the United States. Madison, who had called Hamilton's bank unconstitutional, signed the new bank bill on April 10, 1816.

Daniel Boorstin and Brooks M. Kelley, *A History of the United States*  
(Lexington, Mass.: Ginn and Company, 1986), 170.

### Part B.

Rank in order the factors on your list to assess their relative importance in promoting the early Industrial Revolution in the United States. Then, write a one-sentence thesis statement to account for the early development of manufacturing in this country.